

The American Teacher

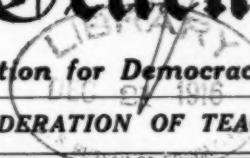
Democracy in Education; Education for Democracy

OFFICIAL ORGAN, THE AMERICAN FEDERATION OF TEACHERS

VOL. V NO. 10

NEW YORK, DECEMBER, 1916

50 CENTS A YEAR



FOUND!

In Attention to Community Needs--
An Insight into Human Problems

In Affiliation with the Men of Toil--
A Sympathy for the Common Lot

In Devotion to the Public's Service--
A Voice Among Men

In Co-operation for Common Ends--
A Power to Dare and to Do

By Teachers in Progressive Unions;
Will not be Given up by Finders:--
But Will Be Shared with All Who
Join Them

THE PENSION PROBLEM

PAUL STUDENSKY

Bureau of Municipal Research, New York City

III. THE NON-CONTRIBUTORY (OR FREE) SYSTEM*

A NON-CONTRIBUTORY (or free) system, as stated in a previous article, is a retirement system operated entirely at the expense of the government and free from contributions on the part of the employees.

Many persons favor a non-contributory retirement system. The older and the younger employees favor its establishment for different reasons.

The old employee is greatly interested in retirement benefits but he does not believe in contributing. During the short period which remains for him to serve he could hardly contribute any considerable share of the cost of his retirement benefit, unless exorbitant contributions were extracted from him. He therefore minimizes the importance of the contributory factor. Moreover, he usually considers his past service as exemplary and deserving a special reward. He feels therefore outraged to be asked to contribute anything towards the cost of the retirement benefit which he feels he deserves so well. He claims a pension as a gratuity in recognition of long and faithful service.

The young employee who prefers a non-contributory system is generally little interested in retirement benefits because of their remoteness. He remains indifferent to the establishment of a retirement system as long as it costs him nothing. He wants his entire salary for

* In the first article it was stated that retirement systems can be classified according to source of financial support (government or employee) into three types—wholly contributory (supported entirely by the employees themselves); non-contributory (entirely at the expense of the government), and partly contributory (supported jointly by the employees and by the government). The wholly contributory system was reviewed in the previous article.

the satisfaction of his immediate wants and cares little to set aside anything for the contingencies of a future 20, 30 or 40 years distant. He even finds his salary inadequate and claims, therefore, that if a retirement benefit is to be established for him it should be in form of a gratuity provided by the government in recognition of the smallness of salary it pays him and should be equivalent to an increase of compensation for services rendered. In organizing against a contributory system and putting forth the demand for a gratuity the younger employees join hands with the older employees altho their reasons for supporting this demand are not identical.

The opponents of a non-contributory system are also numerous. They argue that it makes of the employee a greater slave. They say that the administrator of the government, who establishes a non-contributory system, is guided by the idea that the government pays for it. He believes it his duty, therefore, to exercise a considerable control over the system and he frames the retirement bill so that the employees are not represented in a retirement board and cannot control for their own benefit the expenditure of public money. He seeks to include under it only such benefits as he believes would increase the efficiency of service and are of primary importance to the government as an employer, and he is inclined to consider the desires of employees as of only secondary importance. This is one of the reasons why, for example, benefits at resignation or dismissal, which are essential to the freedom of employees, are generally not included in non-contributory systems. The administrator holds over the heads of employees the constant threat that should they resign or be dismissed, they would forfeit all benefits.

Because of the forfeitures at resignation or dismissal attached to the grant of

"rewards for faithful services," the more independent employees do not share the enthusiasm of the older men over their establishment. They fear that the benefits of this character may put them in the position defined more than 160 years ago by Dr. Johnson in his celebrated dictionary in the year 1755, as follows: "pensioner—a slave of state hired by a stipend to obey his master." Of course the development of democracy in every field of life is bound to influence even a scheme autocratically conceived. After a fight of many years the British Civil Service employees forced upon their superannuation scheme, which was almost a hundred years' old, a provision for the payment of some benefits at resignation altho they still forfeit a considerable part of their benefits. "It is therefore true that a non-contributory system," say its opponents, "would create an impediment to the freedom of the employees and that it might take them many years of fighting before they would be able to overcome it. Altho it would be of little concern to the older generation of employees who have but a few more years to serve, it would be of great concern to the younger generations who are at the beginning of their careers which on that account would be made long and painful."

Another argument advanced against the establishment of a non-contributory system is that it is more adaptable to the viewpoint of the older employee and less open to consideration of contingencies which threaten the younger employee. The lack of interest which the younger employees are inclined to display toward retirement benefits is most manifest when a non-contributory system is proposed.¹

¹Experience shows that the young employee becomes interested in benefits only as he is required to contribute. Then he wants to know what benefits are offered to him in return for his money. He frequently objects to the system, but nevertheless he discusses the benefits more or less intelligently. On the other hand when a non-contributory sys-

The younger employees who are in the majority² frequently allow older employees who, in contrast to them, are deeply interested in gratuitous benefits because they would start to enjoy them immediately, to represent the viewpoint of *all* the employees before the administrators and legislators of the government. They hardly realize how far their economic interests diverge.

The contingencies which threaten the younger and the older employees are not identical. Disability thru accident or disease, may strike the young employee early in life; early death may take him away when young and unable to carry a large insurance on a small salary, leaving a widow with small children least able to provide for themselves; he may have to resign or be dismissed after having been in the service for several years; finally if he has escaped all these risks, he will face superannuation as his remotest contingency. In the case of the older employee, on the other hand, superannuation is a more probable contingency than early disability, resignation, dismissal or early death. His death risks are different for he has undoubtedly made some insurance provision before and he needs less insurance since his children are grown up and are self-dependent. As he is the spokesman of the employees and his needs are thought to be most immediate, the administrators and legislators of the government are willing to embody his requests in legislation and to sacrifice other contingencies threatening its employees in order to increase the superannuation benefit. This again is another reason why so generally

tem is proposed he is indifferent. He readily agrees to its establishment, but he knows not what benefits are provided and cares little to know.

²The majority of New York City employees have served eight years or less and are under 37 years of age.—Commission on Pensions, *Report on the Pension Funds of the City of New York*, Part II, p. 406.

in non-contributory systems the employees who die, are dismissed, or resign early in their career, as most of them do, forfeit all benefits for themselves and for their families in order to permit increased benefits to the fortunate ones who remain in the service until old age.

The opponents of non-contributory systems further argue that a non-contributory system eventually becomes contributory with the difference, however, that the contributions are disguised and that their burden is shifted upon the younger generation of employees. As the years go by and the number of gratuities increase and become more burdensome for the government to bear, they are no longer justified as "rewards" and "charitable grants."³ Economic forces tend to include them in the compensation and to depress wages. The government, as an employer, would justify the expense as a means to obtain the best work for the cheapest remuneration and would say to its employees: "I am paying you not only your immediate wage, but also a retirement benefit. I would be justified to pay you less than the market wage because I am paying you huge amounts in benefits, which are of considerable value to you." And in actual practice it would tend to keep the wages low and not to increase them as rapidly as they would have increased had there been no retirement system. The

³ Sir Robert Hamilton stated in his *Memorandum to the Royal Commission on Civil Establishments in 1887* that "Payment of superannuation cannot be defended on the ground of its being charitable contributions, for the State as the trustee of the people's money would not be justified in making any such use of it. But it can be defended on the ground that it is a means of procuring cheaper service and keeping down the amount of the salaries which would otherwise be payable. In other words, it represents deferred pay, but if this be so it appears to me to be clearly inequitable to withhold from the representatives of a man who dies on full pay the deferred pay which he has earned."

experience of the British Civil Service, which has a non-contributory system, is a marked illustration of this fact. The British employees have fought for many years, claiming that the government depresses wages because of retirement benefits, that it deducts the cost of benefits in fixing wages, that the benefits are therefore not gratuities but parts of the compensation earned, and that the employees and their families have a right to a part of that compensation when they resign, are dismissed, or die. They have won their fight. The government acknowledged that it considered the cost of benefits in fixing wages, that the benefits were no longer gratuities but a "deferred pay," and it introduced in 1909 a law providing for the payment of a part of that "deferred pay" at resignation, dismissal and death.

In considering the economic process by which the retirement benefits change from "gratuities" into a "deferred pay" the student of this subject asks: "What groups of employees would be benefited and what groups would lose in this long process of change?" To this question the opponents of non-contributory systems give the following answer: The older generation of employees, retiring during the early period of the existence of the system, would be graciously granted a free gift. Their benefits would be gratuitous in nature and they would continue to receive them as such to the end of their lives. As the number and cost of these gratuities increase, the government would tend to shift the burden upon the salaries, and the younger generations of employees would be made to pay the bill. Furthermore, as the benefits would be included in the compensation, the younger employees would also be made to pay their own prospective benefits; in course of time those of them who would remain in the service would draw benefits which would no longer be gratuitous in nature, but something they bought and paid for, whereas, those of them who resign or are dismissed, or the families of those who die would receive

little or nothing in return for their sacrifices. "These are some of the startling inequalities resulting from the establishment of a non-contributory system," say its opponents. "We are against a system which endangers the freedom of employees, which is inequitable as it benefits one group of employees at the expense of another and which is misleading as it makes the employees think first that they receive gratuities and next that they are paying for them more than their cost, and on the other hand, makes the administrator think first that the government pays the entire cost and next that his duty is to shift the burden upon the employees."

Among the many arguments which the government advances against the establishment of non-contributory benefits two arguments prevail: one refers to the cost being too great for the government alone to bear, and the other refers to the obligation of the employees to save something from their salaries. Even should a non-contributory system be actually established, the government would not be satisfied with disguised deductions from salary and would again and again advance the two arguments until legislators would incorporate in the law a provision for actual deductions from salary and change the system to a contributory basis. This would result in new readjustments and possibly in new inequalities as between the employees, covered by the old non-contributory and those covered by the new contributory system.

Among the advocates of non-contributory systems there is a group of scientists who recognize the inequalities arising in a non-contributory system. But they contend that the difficulties may be insurmountable only in the case of those employees who are in the service at the time of establishment of the system. They propose to restrict its application to future entrants, where they say, all difficulties would be overcome and the system would show its distinct merits, and they propose to combine it with an elaborate device for reducing the wages.

The government would offer new entrants a compensation consisting of two payments: the payment of a smaller immediate wage and the payment of the cost of their retirement benefit actuarily determined and set aside annually into a reserve fund and refundable upon resignation, dismissal or death. Since, however, there are no precedents for non-contributory systems so devised, the question whether this plan would be practical or not and whether it would or would not lead to new complications can hardly be ascertained.

A careful examination of the pension movement abroad and in this country shows that the arguments against non-contributory benefits are constantly gaining in weight and that the government, the employees and the public at large are looking with increasing disfavor upon non-contributory systems. The tendency of the entire movement leads towards its gradual abandonment. In the next article we will consider the arguments for and against retirement systems supported jointly by the government and by the employees.

(To be concluded)

A FAR-SEEING PRINCIPAL

To the Treasurer of the Teachers Union:

My principal would like to know whether the Teachers Union would at times accept voluntary contributions from him. He sympathizes fully with the good cause and intention of the Teachers Union, and regrets the fact that our Constitution prevents his being one of us. I sincerely hope you will grant him this privilege, as I can assure you he is indeed a sincere sympathizer.

— P S — Brooklyn.

NOTE:—The Executive Board has recommended to the Union the adoption of a Voluntary Contribution Fund, since requests of a similar nature have been made by friends outside the profession altogether.—ED.

BED ROCK

THAT ONE-SIXTH of England's 6,000,000 school children are "so physically or mentally defective or diseased as to be incapable of deriving reasonable benefit from the education which the state provides" is stated in a report just issued by the chief medical officer of the Board of Education. The report has aroused great interest and has come as a shock to the public generally. England, it seems, has suddenly awakened to the fact that poverty, unemployment, disease, and starvation are not particularly conducive to the development of a strong and virile race. The war has forced her to compare her muddling methods with the policy of her thro going rival, as Sir George Newman's report goes on to show.

Eight years' work has brought to light a large mass of physical defect and disease, varied in character and widespread, most of it preventable. In regard to the data thus provided we can form two general conclusions. First, not less than a quarter of a million children are seriously crippled, invalid, or disabled; not less than a million school children are so physically or mentally defective or diseased as to be unable to derive reasonable benefit from the education which the state provides. If this figure be considered merely from a financial point of view and quite apart from the disease, suffering and premature death entailed, it will be seen that the state is not getting adequate returns, on physical grounds alone, for a substantial part of its expenditure on elementary education.

Altho this waste is being lessened by better housing, better labor conditions, and purer and cheaper food, together with ampler medical facilities and sounder ideals in education and hygiene, "the nation moves with incredible slowness," says Sir George.

Consideration of the situation seems to indicate that the physical welfare, and in part the education, of the child of school age is dependent upon ante-school conditions; and dependent also upon post-school

conditions. In other words, if we are determined to rear a healthy and virile race of high capacity we must, from a physical standpoint, begin earlier and continue later than the hitherto accepted period of education. What is needed, indeed, is an effective supervision and a sound and practical training of the body from the end of infancy to adolescence. It is said sometimes that in the interest of economy the state cannot afford such a complete scheme. My submission is that in the interest of economy the state cannot afford to neglect a complete scheme.

It is interesting to find that in spite of this startling revelation of neglect and stupidity it was necessary for the National Association of Head Teachers, meeting recently at Nottingham to declare that "it would be false economy to reduce the existing national or local expenditure on education, and to protest against any proposals tending to impair the efficiency of the education of the working classes."

An English exchange quotes the following from Der Tag:

We Germans can proudly point to the fact that our expenditure on the education of our children has been fully maintained during the war at its former level. In Prussia and elsewhere it has even, for certain objects, been increased. But the money-making, so-called democratic England finds it necessary to cut down her education bill to the lowest limit. We rejoice in the fact that our enemies are discouraging the education and instruction of the masses. By the mere fact that British children are being deprived of education we have a great victory over England, for after the war, more than ever before, will knowledge and education, organization and adaptability on the part of all classes of the population bring victory in the economic struggle.

Whether England will take Sir George Newman's report seriously remains to be seen.

What are the conditions in your city? Or must we wait for a war to come to reveal the facts to us?

IN RE PROFESSIONAL ETHICS

BY SCHOOL

SUPPOSE: A number of teachers, your colleagues and peers, were to visit your class-room for the avowed purpose of observing and learning;

Suppose: Those teachers, having come and gone, were to draw up a report containing criticism of your work, favorable and unfavorable;

Suppose: Those teachers were then to submit this report to your superior;

Suppose: Your superior, after reading this report, were to lay it before you with all the evidence of having given it his official consideration;

Suppose: After thinking on these matters, you were impressed with the manifest danger, the pernicious absurdity, of permitting your peers to act as your irresponsible and gratuitous supervisors;

Suppose, now, that all these things were to happen,

Would you, then, have courage enough to sign and forward the following epistle to your superior:

Dear Mr. Principal:

The report sent to you of the recent visit to our school of a number of outside teachers which you were kind enough to lay before us, and which contained criticism made by those teachers of our class-room work, has given rise among us to certain views which we consider it our duty respectfully to communicate to you. We consider it especially proper to do this in view of the likelihood that those visits and reports may become a regular annual practice.

We desire, first of all, to recall in this connection a principle which is fundamental to the teaching profession, and the justice and necessity of which cannot be open to question, viz: that the only criticism of the teacher's work which can be considered legitimate and proper, is that which proceeds from inspection by his authorized and official superiors. We cannot admit that it is proper for a superior to receive the criticism, favorable or unfavorable, made by

a teacher on the work of one of his peers. Such a practise would not only jeopardize the standing of the individual teacher, but, what is even more serious, must give rise among teachers to mutual distrust and suspicion. Such a practise constitutes a species of supervision which is insidious, irresponsible and gratuitous. Such a practise must be declared unprofessional and intolerable.

We do not for a moment believe that the teachers whose criticisms of our work were contained in the report in question, were deliberately guilty of this breach of professional ethics. We believe, rather, that they can only be charged with insufficient knowledge of the principle above set forth. We desire to express the hope, however, that in the interest, primarily, of the dignity of our profession, a means will be found for bringing this principle to their notice, so that, in their subsequent visits, it will not again be violated.

The suppositions above set forth are not hypothetical, but the epistle, after having been duly drawn up, was never sent to the addressee.

Is it possible that the teachers lacked the courage?

DEMOCRACY IN EDUCATION

The September number of *The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* is given over to an excellent symposium on *New Possibilities in Education*. In this the social and democratic viewpoint is seen to dominate the aspirations of the constructive leaders of educational thought. The symposium deals exclusively with opportunities and subject matter and extension of school services. It will perhaps take another volume to bring out the solemn absurdity of trying to administer democratic education thru teachers organized into rigid battalions of servile routineers. The collection is edited by Dr. Ambrose L. Suhrie, of the University of Pennsylvania.

THE END OF THE FIFTH YEAR

AT THE end of each year since the establishment of THE AMERICAN TEACHER we have stated our view of what has been accomplished by the paper in the year. This custom we excuse on the ground of professional conceit. But we find the process useful in deciding what is best to do next, whether to push a particular move further, or to develop an idea that is a necessary but neglected portion of the philosophy of life and education from which we derive our spiritual sustenance.

Early in the year 1916 the campaign of information and education which the paper has been carrying on resulted in the transformation of the Teachers' League of New York City into the Teachers' Union. At a great meeting held on March 10 the organization of The Teachers' Union of the City of New York was completed. Many of the former members of the Teachers' League would not go with the new organization for the reason that alliance with labor unions was considered ill-advised and unprofessional. But the Teachers' Union bound into a vital organization those who feel that the need of fundamental changes in the educational system are paramount to personal dislikes of labor unions and labor leaders. Furthermore, teachers are coming to understand that the workingmen constitute the only group in the community from which teachers may expect anything but exploitation.

THE AMERICAN TEACHER soon became the official organ of the Teachers' Union. With this support and with timely giving of funds by many friends of the paper, a small but real financial crisis was met, and is now almost forgotten.

In September THE AMERICAN TEACHER began its career as the official organ of The American Federation of Teachers. This body is the national organization of teachers' unions. The Federation unites the eight local unions of

teachers in the country, and is affiliated with the American Federation of Labor. Thru this official connection with teachers in Chicago and other cities we are bringing to the minds of our readers in the profession of teaching a sense of social obligation to their fellowworkers. We are earnestly trying to make teachers everywhere feel that the schools and the children in them suffer when teachers in the City of Chicago are dropped from the service simply and solely because they have joined an organization, the American Federation of Labor, of which the unscrupulous commercial politicians controlling education in Chicago happen to disapprove. We want teachers elsewhere to have a deeper sense of their obligations than has the one who said to the present writer, "Well, it's all right for the Chicago teachers to kick, but why should I worry about it?" We might even wish that such short-visioned teachers could see their own danger, since evil ideas like good ones make their way readily thru the ether.

As a valuable by-product of the affiliation between teachers and workingmen it has already developed that teachers may profit immensely in a social way from learning at first hand the economic forces that bring the workingmen together. The understanding of these forces carries with it a great and moving sympathy which we think has never been expressed so well as in the leading article in the October number written by Mrs. Ida L. M. Fursman, Vice-President of The American Federation of Teachers. This understanding with its attendant sympathy is one of the best of this year's contributions of THE AMERICAN TEACHER.

The special evil that afflicts the educational system of New York City is what we have designated as "wasteful, unfair, incompetent and inhuman supervision." The teachers of New York have submitted to this evil in its numerous forms until the ability to realize the conditions under which it affects every

(Continued on page 162)

The American Teacher

Democracy in Education: Education for Democracy

Published monthly, except July and August, by
THE AMERICAN TEACHER COMPANY, INC.,
70 Fifth Avenue, New York City
ALEXANDER FICHANDLER.....President
CHARLOTTE E. LEE.....Vice-President
JAS. D. LESTER.....Treasurer

Edited by
HENRY R. LINVILLE
Editor-in-Chief

BENJAMIN C. GRUENBERG
Managing Editor

Benjamin Glassberg
J. EDWARD MAYMAN
Business Manager
SAM SCHMALHAUSEN
Circulation Manager

At the time of expiration, a bill will be found in the copy. Subscribers are requested to give prompt notice of changes in address.

Remittances should be made in postal money-order, express order, draft, stamps or check (New York exchange).

**SUBSCRIPTION PRICE, 50 CENTS FOR THE
YEAR—FOREIGN, 60 CENTS.**

Entered as second-class matter, February 21, 1912,
at the Post Office, at New York, N. Y.; under the
Act of March 3, 1879.

VOL. V. DECEMBER, 1916 No. 10

Officers of the American Federation of Teachers

(Affiliated with American Federation of Labor)

CHAS B STILLMAN, President

1620 Lake Ave., Wilmette, Ill.

IDA L M FURSMAN, Vice-President

4465 N. Kildare Ave., Chicago.

MARY F DWYER, Rec. Secretary

2817 Cambridge Ave., Chicago

MARGARET SNODGRASS, Corr. Sec.

1061 Dakin St., Chicago

F G STECKER, Financial Sec.

1618 Lake Ave., Wilmette, Ill.

JAMES A MEADE, Treasurer

2628 Sayre Ave., Chicago

MARGARET A HALEY, Nat'l Organizer

844 Unity Building, Chicago

Trustees

R D CHADWICK. Ida M Halpin

Margaret A. Haley Hedwig Hochbaum

Amelia M Prendergast

PROFESSIONAL ETHICS

A COMMUNICATION entitled "In Re Professional Ethics" appearing in another column of this number expresses resentment at a practise that has developed out of the "Visiting Day" system in New York City. Teachers are permitted to take three days a year for visiting classes in other schools than their own. They are supposed to make observations and to report to the superintendent what they have seen. Our correspondent maintains that the system opens the way for judgment of professional work being made by peers, which is objectionable in view of the fact that superiors only should judge, for they alone are responsible.

We may readily admit a just cause for complaint on the part of teachers who have been visited by irresponsible observers that have reported unfavorably on what they have seen. The practise may readily develop into a disturbing element in the daily life of teachers who happen to be teaching in a school that is convenient for the visiting teachers. There are definite reasons why this is likely to be true.

In the first place, the average visiting teacher gets his ideas of criticism from the practise of his own superiors. Superiors being busy men have little time to stay long enough in a class they are inspecting to settle themselves into the spirit of the class, if many of them ever could at all, and they have less time to think over a plan for giving constructive aid to the teacher. But they do have time to apply certain formal standards to what they see going on, with the result that they find things being done wrong. By long custom in school supervision criticism comes to mean finding fault. And so when the teacher goes a-visiting she finds fault, too, like the little girl playing school who stamps and scolds because her own teacher has set the example. Undoubtedly, many visiting teachers feel under obligations to find fault in order to justify in their minds the beneficent act of a superior in granting a day afield.

Another source of irritation between the observed and the observer may often be a difference in ideals both as to methods of instruction and as to relative importance of elements in the subject matter. A teacher who is likely to be visited often by teachers or by superintendents takes not a little risk if he is inclined to experiment in methods of presentation and in the selection of subject matter. These experiments sometimes fail, and those are the days when visitors are most likely to come. A teacher who is sensitive to his environment, part of which may be a particularly oppressive and cumbersome-minded person of adult years, is liable to appear at a serious disadvantage when an experiment in teaching results unfavorably. Thus there is an obvious premium on sticking to the last that is handed down, or at least on having in readiness for the consumption of visitors a perennial "show" lesson. The differences in ideals between the observed and the observer might become the subject of calm and reasonable discussion, if both had the time and the inclination.

We cannot be sure that our correspondent would oppose visiting among teachers, provided our system of supervision with all its infamous pettiness and bad psychology could be destroyed. But we believe he would not. The members of other professions visit one another. Artists of all kinds, painters, musicians, actors, visit their fellowworkers with enthusiasm and evident profit. Ministers hear one another preach. Lawyers observe one another conduct cases in court, and are glad of the opportunity. And surgeons, whose most delicate work requires absolute self-control are not disturbed if the room is full of sharp-eyed specialists. Why then should teachers object to other teachers observing them at their common professional work?

Perhaps our correspondent came nearer the answer than he realized. The visitors are *irresponsible*. But they are irresponsible in a more significant sense than in not being mere superiors. They

are irresponsible to any set of ideals which both the observed and the observer have had a part in developing. Neither one nor the other has had a word to say about the methods of work, nor about the course of study under which they are working, nor about the number of years they will continue to slave at doing the scores of things that neither perhaps approves. Thus there is little pride in the profession on the part of either. But there is no lack of sullen resentment when one puts himself in the position where he may point out the faults of the other.

We are not yet a profession, but we shall be when we break down artificial standards and put up our own, thus becoming responsible to ourselves and to society for a workable body of ideals.

THE END OF THE FIFTH YEAR

(Continued from page 160)

teacher have become well-nigh rudimentary. There is widespread dissatisfaction among the teachers in that city, but it has not been clear just how we were to begin on the gigantic undertaking of creating livable conditions free from inhuman supervision. One thing that has always operated to hinder improvement is the fear of the teachers to say or do anything that would give us a good start. Fear is the weapon by which the oppressors keep their power.

It thus appears that a successful campaign against the forces that are responsible for oppressive supervision (and certain forces embodied in human beings are certainly responsible for its maintenance) must be inaugurated either indirectly with the slow-moving aid of the oppressed, or directly by some method that will undermine the credit and standing of the oppressors more quickly. The latter method has already been inaugurated, and the experiment is being observed by us closely. If our readers will watch the "Fluoroscope" series they will be interested in our new attempt to "get under the skin" of the "System."

REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE ON
SCHOOLS, ILLINOIS STATE FEDER-
ATION OF LABOR, QUINCY,
OCT. 16-20, 1916

Pursuant to the action of the Thirty-third Annual Convention of the Illinois State Federation of Labor, held at Alton, Illinois, October 18 to 22, 1915, a permanent committee on schools was appointed "to safeguard the children of the workers, to secure for all students the right to mental freedom in education, and to secure the expression in the educational system of the ideals of organized labor."

The committee believes that the most important questions confronting the Trade Unionists of the State at this time are, the attack made upon the rights of the teachers of Chicago to organize, the need in this state for free textbooks, the conditions in the rural schools and the possibility of another effort being made at the next session of the legislature to separate the vocational and general educational systems under what has been known as the "dual" system.

The committee first recounts the systematic efforts of the Chicago School Board to disrupt the Chicago Teachers' Federation beginning with the Baldwin Senate Commission and continuing with the adoption of the "Loeb Rule No. 1." The report quotes part of the decision of Judge McSurely granting an injunction against the enforcement of this rule.

It may be conceded that the Board has power to pass rules regulating its teaching force . . . but the board has no power to pass an unreasonable rule in violation of the statute or constitution.

* * * * *

Is the rule in question discrimination between different classes of citizens, conferring special privileges upon a class or group less than all? A majority of this Court holds that it is.

The Court said further:

It is unquestionable that if the Legisla-

ture should enact a statute containing the same provision as this contract in regard to any work to be done for Boards of Education . . . the provision would be absolutely null and void as in conflict with the constitution of the State. If such a restriction were sought to be enforced by any laws of the State it would constitute an infringement upon the constitutional rights of citizens. There is no more reason or justification for such a contract as this than there would be for a provision that no one should be employed except members of some particular party or church. . . . The Board of Education may stipulate for the quality of material to be furnished and the degree of skill required in workmanship, but a provision that the work shall be done only by certain persons or classes of persons, members of certain societies necessarily creates a monopoly in their favor.

. . . It follows logically that a rule which restricts employment to non-members of such societies as unions is also void.

Then, as readers of THE AMERICAN TEACHER knows came Loeb Rule No. 2, whereby 68 teachers were dropped, 38 of them Union members rated "good" or better by Superintendent Shoop. This was to all intents and purposes a violation of the injunction previously secured. The Committee therefore urges organized labor to assist in obtaining the following legislation:

1st. A law that will guarantee to public school teachers the right to organize and affiliate with organized labor.

2nd. A law that will guarantee permanency of position during efficiency and will make it impossible for the Board of Education to dismiss without notice and without hearing.

3rd. For Chicago an elected Board of Education whose members are paid.

Free Textbooks

To have a real democracy in our educational system free textbooks should be furnished to all the children attending our public schools.

Illinois is far behind other states in this matter. Children here still have to

provide their own books except in cities where they have what is known as "fund books" but children using these books know they are provided as a matter of charity and naturally shrink from asking for them.

Rural Schools

The State of Illinois has no reason to pride itself on the conditions that prevail in the rural schools, but there is cause for rejoicing in the fact that at the last session of the Legislature the school law was so amended as to acquire the heating, ventilation, lighting, seating, water supply, toilets and safety against fire to be such as to conserve the health and safety of the children attending the public schools.

The Committee recommended that Labor should demand the best educational equipment for the rural schools, but that none of it should be at the expense of the already underpaid teachers in those schools.

Vocational Education Bill

As regards this bill it reports that all efforts of the Commercial interests of Chicago at the last session of the Legislature failed to have enacted a "dual" vocational education bill. No legislation on this subject was passed. The Illinois State Federation of Labor, together with the Chicago Teachers' Federations and other organizations, was active in defeating the "dual bill." It failed to receive sufficient support to be reported out of either the Senate or House Committee.

It re-affirms the declaration made by the Illinois State Federation of Labor Committee on Vocational Education which was adopted at the Peoria convention in 1914:

We disapprove the setting up of any separate state or district board of administration to have charge of vocational education. We believe that the vocational school courses should at all times be under the guidance and control of the school authorities having direction of general education, as the system best adapted to educate properly our children for their future activities,

as workers, and as men and women capable of participating in all the benefits and enjoyments of higher civilization.

The following is recommended to be included in the legislative program:

First—Compulsory school attendance of all children between the ages of seven and sixteen.

Second—(a) Authorizing the Boards of Education of all school districts in the State to provide instruction in vocational subjects.

(b) All courses in vocational education shall be administered in each school district by the same board of education or trustees that administers the general educational courses.

(c) In school districts maintaining vocational teaching, there shall be appointed, by the board of education, or trustees, an advisory committee or committees on vocational education; each committee to consist of an equal number of employers of labor and persons directly associated and connected with bona fide labor organizations.

(d) Vocational instruction shall include the teaching of the sciences underlying the various industries and industrial pursuits being taught and their historical, economic and social bearings.

OUR FIRST DELEGATE

Mrs. Ida Fursman, the first delegate of her calling in a convention of the American Federation of Labor, lost no opportunity to impress upon the trade-unionists gathered here the importance of the school-room as a moulder of the thought of the younger generation as to industrial issues. Her appeal on behalf of the Federation of Teachers says:

It is our earnest conviction that organized labor, on behalf of itself and all of the people, must closely watch our public schools, which are now determining the quality of the democracy of the next generation. A radical reconstruction of our educational system to meet changing social and economic conditions is now in progress. The teacher is made the centre of attack, since it is logically recognized that the moulding of the child's habits of thought

and life results not from material equipment or texts, but from the living personality of the teacher. Hence there has developed a vicious country-wide attempt to abridge the freedom of the teacher—freedom of speech, of organization, of citizenship.

Henceforth the organizers for the American Federation of Labor will lend their aid to the organizers of the Teachers' Federation to bring the school teachers into the union ranks. Not only will these efforts be exerted through personal solicitation of the instructors, but central labor bodies in industrial centres will be asked to use their influence also. Wherever trade-union organizations have officers who take an interest in this development, candidates for positions on school boards will be put forward, and such as are elected will inevitably lend encouragement to teachers in their respective towns to get into the union.

All of these plans wait for their realization upon the long-continued and earnest efforts of a great number of people. There are so few of these educational engineers in the labor ranks to-day that the plan will remain little more than a plan for years to come. Nevertheless, the foundation has been laid for a very different structure of school control than the country has known.—L. T., Baltimore Correspondent *N. Y. Post*, November 25, 1916.

THE WAR BONUS

THE TEACHERS of London, thru a representative committee of the London Teachers' Association, have conferred with a committee of the London County Council on the subject of a War Bonus to the teachers, to meet the very large and rapid increases in the cost of living. The teachers have not pressed for a revision of salary schedules; in spite of the fact that it has become literally impossible for many of them to meet the cost of the bare necessities on their incomes, they have chosen to request a bonus to meet the pressing emergency, and to

postpone the revision of schedules that were inadequate before the war, until a more happy time. The Council had already adopted the principle of the War Bonus for all of its employes earning £3 a week or less. The issue is therefore, according to *The London Teacher*, the official organ of the Association, whether this rule should apply to all teachers whose salaries fall within the same limit, and whether the bonus should be that requested by the L. T. A., namely, £26 a year. In conclusion the editorial says:

We have not the slightest doubt as to the reasonableness of both proposals. We have not the slightest doubt as to the force and determination of London teachers with regard to these questions. A refusal by the Council will not be accepted tamely. We do not attempt to anticipate the Council's decision, but of this we have no doubt, *there must not be this time any question of rejecting the teachers' petition.*

The teachers have been reasonable. The assurance that they will be treated reasonably lies, however, in the solidarity of their organization and in the definiteness of their purpose.

WASHINGTON NOTES

From the Report of the Executive Committee of the High School Teachers' Union of Washington, D. C.:

The Rating System

The matter of the system of rating teachers was officially brought to the attention of the Executive Committee by members of the Union and non-members at its June meeting. It was decided that the Committee should not condemn the present system without offering a more satisfactory substitute. A special committee was commissioned to make a careful study of the question and report back to the Executive Committee. The special committee, consisting of Miss Marsh, Mr. Devitt, and Mr. Claffin soon called upon the Superintendent of Schools, Mr. Thurston, who has charge

of the rating system. The Superintendent was most generous to the Committee in granting all the time they desired and in going into the minute details of the rating system and the reason for the various features of it. It was evidenced during the conference that one of the principal weaknesses of the present system (and Mr. Thurston frankly stated that the present rating system is not entirely satisfactory) is the lack of a uniform standard among the rating officials and the lack of a satisfactory method of determining the individual ratings. It is with a view of correcting these faults that the Superintendent introduced a new feature, the "1-2-3 Plan," to which objection has been raised by rating officials and teachers generally. Mr. Thurston invited the cooperation of the High Schools Teachers' Union in working out a satisfactory rating system. The special subcommittee has not made its final report as its investigation is not completed. At present they are communicating with school systems of other cities ascertaining information of their rating systems. In a preliminary report the special committee expressed its conviction: (1st) that a rating system is a necessity to the proper conduct of the school organization and that; (2nd) a rating of "satisfactory or unsatisfactory" could not suffice for the purposes to which the record of ratings are put; (3rd) that there are objectionable features to the present system, and; (4th), that every effort is being put forth in working out a more satisfactory rating system.

Teachers' Pensions

In the matter of a teacher's pension law we have not been idle. Information pertaining to teachers' pensions has been gathered in readiness for a campaign to be waged with Congress this winter. Tho it will be a short session and a very busy one for Congress a vigorous and earnest attempt will be made by our Union to get a wedge in for an adequate and satisfactory teachers' pension law. In fact our campaign already has been

begun. Thru our representatives in the Central Labor Union of the District we have secured not only their indorsement of the principle of a teachers' pension, but they have instructed their legislative committee to cooperate with us in securing such a law. Furthermore the Central Labor Union instructed its delegate to the convention of the American Federation of Labor which is to be held in Baltimore in November, to urge that body to indorse the proposition and instruct its legislative agents to assist in securing a pension law for the District teachers. Our campaign is well defined and we believe our Union is in a position to do the most effective work in this movement that has ever been attempted. As in all our other undertakings for the good of the teaching profession and the promotion of efficiency in our school system we must have, as we will have, the united support and genuine interest of every member of our organization in this campaign. It is the earnest purpose of our Union to justify its existence and to merit the support of each individual member by the actual accomplishment of constructive things—things that are really wanted, deserved, and needed by the school system from the teacher's point of view.

Cooperation

Your president takes this opportunity of expressing his appreciation of the support and hearty cooperation manifested by every officer and member of the Union who has been called upon for service, and of the general interest evidenced in the Union's welfare. This spirit of pulling together is a happy condition in our organization and is itself a prediction of noteworthy achievements by our Union.

Respectfully submitted,
ROY C. CLAFLIN,
President.

To keep mercenary people out of the school, underpay the teachers.

To keep mercenary thoughts out of the school, pay teachers adequately.

**THE HIGH SCHOOL TEACHERS' UNION,
OF WASHINGTON, D. C.**

Whereas, The Chicago School Board has recently discharged over fifty teachers who were rated as efficient, for no apparent reason except their membership in a teachers' union, and

Whereas, In the city of Washington, principals, superintendents, and school board members have uniformly encouraged the formation of unions among the teachers of the capital city, and

Whereas, In the city of Washington prominent citizens, leading newspaper men and high officials have shown no opposition to the union movement among teachers but have encouraged the same,

Therefore be it Resolved, That the High School Teachers' Union of Washington in regular meeting assembled this tenth day of October, 1916, commends the attitude of the Washington Public to

the Chicago School Board and condemns the action of the Chicago School Board in discharging union teachers as an unwarranted usurpation of authority, thoroughly re-actionary and unjust,

Be it Further Resolved, That copies of these resolutions be forwarded to the Chicago School Board, the Chicago Teachers' Unions, the U. S. Commissioner of Education, and THE AMERICAN TEACHER.

YOUR LAST CHANCE

Beginning with the NEW YEAR, the subscription price of THE AMERICAN TEACHER will be increased to one dollar. We advise you to subscribe now and take advantage of the old rate. Send a dollar for two years.

THE AMERICAN TEACHER

(Incorporated)

70 Fifth Avenue, New York

The Book Everyone Endorses

The Book You Want

LEARN TO FIGURE FASTER

The Demands of the Day Require It of Everyone. This is an age of Short-Cuts.

The greatest short-cut of any age, the Panama Canal, could not have been completed on time if other short-cuts had not been used in working it out. Labor-saving devices are found on every hand today. The successful manufacturer does not hesitate to discard a machine, be it ever so new, for one that will do the work quicker, cheaper, better. **Everybody Uses Arithmetic.** Learn the latest and best. It saves time, labor, worry. Don't depend on a piece of paper or machine to do your figuring when it can be done easier, cheaper, quicker, better, by the new, simple, short-cut methods of the Prewett System explained in "**How to Figure Fast.**" Everyone likes it and most people need it every day in business, regardless of age or avocation. Get out of the rut. Cut out the brain-fagging, nerve-trying, old way of figuring and free yourself forever from the drudgery of cumbersome calculations by learning "**How to Figure Fast.**"

E. C. ROBERTSON, GENERAL SALESMAN

The Book You Need

1408 Prairie Ave., Houston, Texas

The Book That Helps

**Statement of Principles Presented by The American Federation of Teachers and Endorsed by The American Federation of Labor in National Convention,
Baltimore, November 24, 1916**

1. The right of teachers to organize and affiliate with labor must be recognized.
2. If our children during their most impressionable years are to have the benefit of daily contact with examples of upstanding American manhood and womanhood, and not to be exposed to an atmosphere of servility in the schoolroom, teachers must be given warning and a hearing before being separated from the service.
3. The teacher must be guaranteed the opportunity to make his due influence felt in the community, working thru the school chiefly, but free to work thru all the avenues of citizenship.
4. The control of the teaching staff should be removed from the Board of Education, and placed in the hands of the professional expert, the Superintendent of Schools.
5. If our democracy is not to be crippled at its source, democratic school administration must be secured by insuring to the teacher an effective voice in that administration.
6. The schools must be removed from politics by the application of the merit principle of civil service to the employment, advancement, and dismissal of teachers, thus securing tenure during efficiency.
7. The work of the teacher, now notoriously ill-paid, determines the quality of our future citizenship, and should receive financial recognition more nearly commensurate with its importance to the community.
8. Vocational education should be encouraged, but only under a 'unit system.'
9. The people should directly control educational policies thru the popular election of boards of education.
10. A system of free textbooks is an essential of genuinely free and democratic public schools.
11. Enlightened public policy demands adequate pension provisions for public school teachers.

